

January 9, 2007

State Library Budget Hearing

Representative Wells and members of the Committee:

I am John Meckler a K-12 Librarian from Plains Public Schools. I wish to thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. I'm here in support of School Libraries but I feel that I can speak for all Libraries especially small rural ones.

I have been the Librarian at Plains for the past 30 years. Three major events have had a profound effect on the way Plains School Library has operated. The first was the introduction of computers and their use in the Library. The second was when schools were allowed to become members of the Federations. The third was the opportunity to get Infotrac at an affordable cost.

It stands to reason that the introduction of computers really needs no explanation.

When schools and other libraries were brought into the Federations it gave us all a voice to express our need to unite and develop resource sharing strategies. When all libraries are able to work together and share their collections and develop other ways to share databases is when small rural libraries become as important as the larger ones.

Infotrac is the database that makes it possible for smaller libraries to have what larger ones have. As a small school Infotrac has become a major key for students to learn how to manage the vast amount of information we are confronted with. I have students from the First Grade through Twelve using Infotrac. Without the support of the legislature we could not afford to have this database. The goal in Plains is to teach our students how to find, evaluate and use information wisely, to become discriminate users of information and develop the skills necessary to become knowledgeable citizens of tomorrow.

I strongly urge you to continue funding Federations and Infotrac. This is an investment in our future that is more than mere dollars. It will help to develop citizens who will be better informed and better able to make the choices necessary to carry us into the future.

Again, thanks for the opportunity to speak to you.

John Meckler, K-12 Librarian
Plains Public School

